The Political Story of Climate Change

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Environment is a human rights issue

It is protected in the Constitution of Kenya both in the Bill of Rights in Chapter Four and in Chapter Five which is on Land and Environment.
The important parts of the Constitution journalists must remember

Chapter four

The Bill of Rights

Article 42

Chapter Five

Land and Environment

Articles 69 and 70
In Chapter Four Which is the Bill Of Rights it is to be found in ..... 

Article 42 which says ..... 

Every person has the right to a clean and healthy environment which includes the right—

(a) To have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through legislative and other measures, particularly those contemplated in Article 69; and ..... 

(b) To have obligations relating to the environment fulfilled under Article 70.
Generation to be protected

The Present generation needs to be protected by specific laws and measures.

The Future Generation needs to be vigilant by mastering the three types of stories.
**Chapter Five** which is on Land and Environment

**Part I** talks about land.

**Part II** talks about Environment and Natural Resources

**Article 69** (1) (a) says...

The State shall ensure sustainable exploitation, utilisation, management and conservation of the environment and natural resources, and ensure the equitable sharing of the accruing benefits.

- **Exploitation and utilisation must be done in**...
- **Natural resources**
- **(a) Equitable manner and**.
- **(b) Conserve the environment**
Ten per cent of trees

Article 69 (1)(b) says...
The State shall work to achieve and maintain a tree cover of at least ten per cent of the land area of Kenya.

Forests in Kenya historically have been under a constant threat of destruction and most have already either been destroyed or considerably degraded.
Public participation

Article 69 (1)(d) says……

The State shall encourage public participation in the management, protection and conservation of the environment
Impact assessment

Article 69 (1)(f) says ..... The State shall establish systems of environmental impact assessment, environmental audit and monitoring of the environment.
Eliminate dangerous activities

Article 69 (1)(g) The State shall eliminate processes and activities that are likely to endanger the environment; and.....

The sprawling Mau Forest complex—the starting point for a dozen rivers in Kenya and one of the last surviving blocks of uninterrupted forest land in East Africa, is shrinking as logging companies and growing numbers of settlers hack away its trees.
Benefit the people of Kenya

Article 69 (1)(h) The State shall utilise the environment and natural resources for the benefit of the people of Kenya.
People’s power

Article 70 (1) If a person alleges that a right to a clean and healthy environment recognised and protected under Article 42 has been, is being or is likely to be, denied, violated, infringed or threatened……

The person may apply to a court for redress in addition to any other legal remedies that are available in respect to the same matter.
The Court’s power

Article 7(2) On application under clause (1), the court may make any order, or give any directions, it considers appropriate—

(a) to prevent, stop or discontinue any act or omission that is harmful to the environment;

(b) to compel any public officer to take measures to prevent or discontinue any act or omission that is harmful to the environment; or

(c) to provide compensation for any victim of a violation of the right to a clean and healthy environment.
Another law the journalists should familiarise themselves with is:

African and other developing countries have long argued that since the major industrialized nations... Have contributed the most to global warming, they should shoulder most of the costs. But...

The political torpor round climate change has left the global community with policies too weak to stem emissions.

"Africa used to suffer outside aggression in the past, the latest form of aggression is climate change," Yoweri Museveni.
The gap is consistently growing between what scientists say is necessary to avoid dangerous climate change and what politicians are willing to do.

The world's climate policies, at their current level of ambition, are simply too weak to stem the onrushing tide of emissions.

Politicians everywhere will always have their own interests first!
Climate as a political agenda

The climate change agenda has become so politically driven that important actors have tagged onto it all sorts of competing interests, economic and otherwise.

That should not have been allowed to happen, but it has, and...

There can be no way forward unless and until we confront that fact.

Whenever politicians make scientists either keep quiet or make politically correct statements on climate change, journalists have a duty to expose the truth.
Conservatives avoid the truth

Until today nearly 70 per cent of Republicans in Congress and 90 per cent of the party's congressional leadership deny the reality of human-caused global warming.

This is mainly because the party is mainly backed by big industrialists and capitalists whose big factories are the major culprits of greenhouse gasses emissions.

A cartoonist view of Republicans who deny global warming are funded by energy companies which pollute the air.
A politician crusading campaign

At the risk of being attacked and ridiculed by many the former USA Vice President Al Gore has written a controversial book "The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change." While mapping the future is a risky undertaking, perhaps the only thing riskier is doing nothing.
But the world recognized him

The International Panel of Climate Change was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 for its work on climate change, together with former US Vice-President Al Gore. In its citation, the Norwegian Nobel Committee said that the IPCC and Mr Gore shared the prize "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change".